United Nations E/2015/SR.13

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 April 2015

Original: English

2015 session
21 July 2014-22 July 2015
Operational activities segment

Summary record of the 13th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 25 February 2015, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) ..... (Republic of Korea)
later: Mr. Sajdik (President) ..... (Austria)

Contents

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (*continued*)

(c) South-South cooperation for development (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org).

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/).

15-02823 (E)

Please recycle

In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (A/70/62-E/2015/4) (*continued*)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (E/2014/34/Rev.1, E/2014/35, E/2015/14 (to be issued), E/2015/36 and E/2015/47) (*continued*)

(c) South-South cooperation for development (*continued*)

Panel discussion on the topic "Effectiveness of United Nations system support for national capacity development"

1. **Mr. Lopes** (Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa), guest speaker participating via video link from Addis Ababa, said that development cooperation had become extremely complex as a result of the trend towards stronger regional groupings, the fragmentation of previous global domains of power, and the stronger voice of developing countries in global affairs. The new and emerging players in development were calling for changes in the global economic system, and partnerships with donors established for the purpose of providing technical assistance to Member States were not as straightforward as in the past. Private entities had emerged in both the developed and the developing world, committing more resources in a relatively shorter period of time than had been the case with traditional donors in recent decades. The increasingly complex nature of those new and emerging players had an impact on the United Nations, since a major shift in the world required a similar shift in the functions of the Organization.

2. The United Nations had always demonstrated its capacity to readjust, but the Organization faced several challenges in adapting to those developments. It needed to strengthen its internal processes in order to provide effective global leadership. Modern development actors were nimble and quick to respond to emerging realities and emergencies on the ground, such as outbreaks of war, disease and famine. During such events, international non-governmental organizations, supported by development partners, moved quickly to provide assistance. One reason for their agility and ability to deliver on the spot was that they had flexible internal processes, which allowed them to be more responsive and adaptive to changing environments.

3. The United Nations should adapt its bureaucracy and simplify its rules and regulations to be able to respond rapidly to those most in need. It must reduce the administrative costs of delivering development assistance and review the efficacy of its current operating standards. It should also reform its planning, budgeting and programme delivery to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The Organization could draw on its extensive experience in both administrative and programme reforms in order to strengthen the internal systems that supported its external work.

4. The blurred development environment made effective coordination more essential than ever before, especially in view of the new actors involved. Peacekeeping was no longer merely a specific aspect of peace and security; it was now a major development challenge that had health, employment and educational implications and affected other aspects of socioeconomic development and policies. The new development environment had made it necessary for the United Nation to devise new strategies for rolling out its activities, including streamlined processes for delivery and strong accountability mechanisms. Field operations and programme activities should be aligned with the interrelated areas of humanitarian aid, political assistance and socioeconomic development, in order to prevent duplication of effort and ensure complementarity at the national, regional and local levels.

5. It was also necessary to balance the role of Member States with that of emerging entities and blocs. New channels of inter-State cooperation had emerged and regional governance was becoming increasingly important in trade, finance, health, peace and security, and other areas. Regional entities were gaining a stronger voice worldwide and it was now common for Member States to present their positions through those entities. The Organization should

therefore strengthen its regional cooperation and diplomatic functions accordingly and consider different ways of engaging with those entities.

6. The United Nations was a strong pillar of the modern international relations system and played a unique role in providing moral leadership. It also acted as the custodian of global public goods, including the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals, which were based on global ideas governed by universal and equitable principles and standards. Sustained funding efforts were needed to support the Organization in fulfilling not only its traditional role but also its role in leading the world in implementing that important agenda.

7. Capacity development must be built around ownership and transformation, taking into account major trends, including shifts in political and economic structures, demographic changes, urbanization, inequality, technology and the environment. Developing countries should strengthen their capacities at all levels, and their capacity and skills development must evolve to encompass support processes, mechanisms and outputs for promoting strategic initiatives, policy dialogue and knowledge networks. Donors should ensure that recipient countries took ownership of development assistance and show a spirit of partnership instead of the traditional donor mindset. To provide effective support for national capacity development, the United Nations should have a clear understanding of national priorities. Efforts to promote system-wide coherence and reduce duplication and transaction costs had been enhanced by the resident coordinator arrangement, but many challenges remained.

8. Fragmentation was still a problem, owing to the different budgetary and programme procedures of the various entities and continued tension between core and non-core resources. To achieve coherence, it was important to have a common platform for assessing the results of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks at the country level, especially when those frameworks were perceived as being part of a heavy-demand process that contributed to competition for scarce resources. Support for strategic initiatives was crucial and those frameworks were a useful tool for aligning United Nations support with national plans. They also contributed to the implementation of global norms and standards at the national level. Nonetheless, they had not been fully effective in reducing duplication of efforts and competition for funding, leaving gaps between intentions and actual outcomes. Given the ownership imperatives of national capacity development, the policy space for United Nations development cooperation should be enhanced.

9. Lastly, the United Nations was a trusted collaborator of developing countries because, unlike other partners, it did not impose conditions for its development assistance. However, it must take into account country-specific circumstances, as there was a fine line between pushing for implementation of global standards and encroaching on national policy space.

10. **Ms. Robl** (United States of America), noting that the various development actors were all competing with one another, wondered whether each actor should not specialize in the areas in which it had a competitive advantage. Her delegation also wondered whether United Nations agencies and multilateral entities should not adopt the stance taken by international non-governmental agencies by moving swiftly in response to crises.

11. **Mr. Lopes** (Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa) said that the actions of the United Nations should be different from those of other stakeholders. Nonetheless, the emergence of new actors had shifted the debate on efficiency and the delivery of results. The nimbleness and agility of international non-governmental organizations and philanthropic institutions gave them stature in the development landscape and that was a positive development. For that reason, the United Nations could not afford to be static and must not continue to do business as usual. Specialization was good but it had to be complemented by quality interventions that required a level of efficiency that the Organization was not providing in many instances. That was the lesson to be learned as the Organization defined its priorities for the future.

12. **Mr. Wandel** (Assistant Administrator, United Nations Development Programme; and Director, Bureau of Management), moderator, said that every country must take primary responsibility for its own development, and that a central goal of United Nations operational activities was to help countries develop the capacity to do so. It was important to build national capacities for development planning, data collection and analysis, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Feedback from both programme country Governments and resident coordinators had indicated that the United Nations system made use of

national experts and institutions in the design and implementation phases, but that national monitoring and reporting systems and national procurement, financial and evaluation capacities had been underused.

13. The United Nations system was committed to providing countries with the tools, methodologies, capacities and information needed to manage their development more effectively. The organizations of the system had agreed on a common approach to capacity development and a task team had been established to develop a common approach for measuring progress in that regard. The aim was to ensure that capacity development was at the centre of strategic planning under United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other planning instruments, and that it included the enhancement of national capacities and national ownership. Several promising pilot projects on real-time monitoring were under way within the funds and programmes and the United Nations system was committed to helping countries to take advantage of the data revolution for their policymaking. Much work remained to be done and tracking and reporting were needed.

14. **Mr. Chanthabuly** (Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao People's Democratic Republic), panellist, said that the Lao People's Democratic Republic had long been collaborating with United Nations agencies on capacity-building, which was an endogenous country-driven process that required the involvement of all sectors. External support should not be limited to enhancing individual skills but should also address the institutional, organizational and social dimensions of a country's needs. United Nations agencies in his country had made considerable progress in supporting and strengthening those dimensions by introducing a results-based management approach and adopting common principles and a standard format for reporting results under United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

15. Many United Nations organizations had adopted results-based management or other results-based approaches in order to improve programme management, organizational learning and accountability. Although it was too soon to assess the impact of those approaches on the activities of the Organization at country level, their introduction had generally helped to enhance internal planning coherence and to draw more attention to performance measurement and monitoring, with a shift from a narrow focus on processes and output delivery to a broader focus on outcomes, impact and partnership. Organizations needed to use their comparative advantage and adopt a strategic approach to their interventions in order to deliver development results. United Nations agencies were also working to build the capacities of local-level institutions in response to decentralization as part of governance reforms in many countries. There was increasing demand for national and local capacities, including the use of national volunteers and professionals, particularly in community-based programmes.

16. Four key difficulties had been encountered in implementing results-based approaches within the United Nations development system. First, as performance assessment moved away from inputs to results, it was becoming increasingly difficult for organizations to credibly attribute the results to their own activities, particularly if the volume of resources they invested in the country was modest compared to the investments of other development actors. Second, performance measurement and incentives of current results-based management systems continued to focus on agencies' output delivery as planned for a specific programming cycle, rather than on the contributions that those outputs made to the achievement of sustainable country results and on the performance of the organizations in that regard.

17. Accordingly, decision-making had become supply-driven instead of demand-driven. More demand-driven approaches would bring the capacity-building dimensions into sharper focus and help to address capacity and resource gaps at both country level and within the United Nations system before programmes were implemented. Third, although most organizations had introduced results-based frameworks, they generally had limited capacity to implement those frameworks at country level with the involvement of national partners. Fourth, the lack of accurate data and statistics significantly hindered a more comprehensive use of results-based approaches within the system and in programme countries.

18. The adequacy of United Nations field presence was determined by both the quality and the numbers of the staff mobilized. United Nations organizations had long been working to better prepare staff to meet the changing demands placed on the system, including the need for greater coordination and policymaking in the field. Organizational learning and staff development strategies had been implemented to

reshape technical, office management and general competencies. Staff rotation had been systematized and mobility was encouraged both within and between organizations. There was a greater focus on national and regional activities through as decision-making was delegated to field personnel and resources were decentralized to better respond to the needs of recipient countries in a timely and effective manner.

19. To better support their presence in the field, United Nations organizations were transferring more resources and more authority to the regional and subregional levels. Evolving development priorities required adjustments in the country-level presence of the United Nations system. Not every organization could establish adequate field presence but, overall, United Nations system field presence should reflect priority sectors and issues. In enhancing the technical capacities of field offices, care should be taken to avoid increasing the transaction costs of programme delivery. Improved coordination and more coherent programming required a diversity of expertise which was not necessarily available in a single agency. Information and communications technology could facilitate access to knowledge, including access to the technical and referral services of any part of the United Nations system. Lastly, efforts were needed to create a knowledge culture and encourage knowledge-sharing.

20. **Mr. Choesni** (Director for International Development Cooperation, State Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas, Indonesia), panellist, said that the theme of the United Nations Partnership for Development Framework with Indonesia for 2011-2015 was "development for all people and for all regions". The framework rested on three pillars, namely equity, participation and resilience, and was geared to three priority regions. Working groups had been established to address the cross-cutting issues of gender, human rights, HIV/AIDS and youth. In general, United Nations support for development in Indonesia covered three broad areas: policy advocacy; capacity-building and knowledge-sharing. The aims of the framework included improving access, through country offices, to international platforms for development, global expertise, international norms and standards, and practical innovations, and increasing support for development initiatives and South-South and triangular cooperation. Beyond providing funding support for Indonesia, the United Nations play a catalytic role in that country's development.

21. In total, 22 United Nations institutions were working under the Partnership Development Framework in Indonesia. Recent outcomes included the endorsement of a presidential decree and national strategy on early childhood development; the establishment of a democracy index through a joint initiative of United Nations institutions and the Government; the adoption of measures to improve access to international markets for the country's products; and the development of an early warning system for disasters. The regular monitoring and evaluation cycle had involved consultations between government officials and other stakeholders in order to assess the comparative advantages and weaknesses of the programmes implemented under the Partnership Development Framework.

22. The United Nations had strong links to the Government and was able to bridge the communication gap between the Government and stakeholders through multi-stakeholder cooperation. It was also able to provide capacity-building assistance at the national and subnational levels, and was seen as neutral and impartial compared to the Government. In addition, the United Nations could advocate international standards and strengthen communication at the national and global levels.

23. On the other hand, coordination among United Nations agencies remained a challenge, and national stakeholders were sometimes unfamiliar with the United Nations agencies in the country, owing to the complexity of the complexity of the United Nations system in some countries. The United Nations programmes should be long-term and more sustainable instead of short-term. The implementation of United Nations programmes was sometimes not flexible; the Organization should therefore adjust its guidelines to the local Indonesian context.

24. His Government was working with the United Nations on policy direction, strategic decision-making and medium-term planning. At the operational level, guidelines for planning, asset transfer, monitoring, evaluation and reporting were being formulated to fall into line with both United Nations rules and government regulations. Monitoring and evaluation were being conducted at two levels: the policy level and the programme and project level. At the policy level, annual reviews of the Partnership for Development Framework were conducted, while at the programme and project

level, the framework was monitored on a quarterly basis in line with government regulations.

25. A series of recommendations had been formulated for the Partnership for Development Framework for the period 2015-2019, including the need to adjust the capabilities of both the Government and the United Nations to the requirements of the new sustainable development goals instead of the Millennium Development Goals. The catalytic role of the United Nations was becoming increasingly important and was something that should be nurtured. Capacity-building measures were needed to assist the Government, including in the area of policy formulation. In addition, both the United Nations and the Government needed to be transformative in order to tackle major challenges relating to data collection, the handling of big data and the use of data for policy analysis. Regarding big data, the laboratory called Pulse Lab Jakarta had been established through a partnership between the Government of Indonesia and the United Nations to facilitate the adoption of new approaches for applying new, digital data sources and real-time analysis techniques to social development.

26. Lastly, cooperation between the United Nations and government institutions should be improved and should be focused on results and specific issues, such as the sustainable development goals and the efforts to achieve all the outstanding Millennium Development Goals. Joint programmes and the programme-based approach should be adopted more in Indonesia in order to deliver more effective results.

27. **Mr. Gass** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), panellist, said that capacity development was an overarching objective of the support provided by the United Nations development system in programme countries. It was also a core component of the post-2015 development agenda and was based on the premise of a new social contract between Governments and citizens. The new sustainable development goals were so comprehensive and ambitious that they could only be achieved if leadership, coordination and accountability in development process were vested with national and local authorities. For that reason, the goal proposed by the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on the Sustainable Development Goals of strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development included three specific targets on capacity development: capacity-building to support national plans for the implementation of the sustainable development goals; increased availability of timely data disaggregated by income, gender, age and race; and support for statistical capacity-building at country level.

28. In addition, eight of the other sustainable development goals referred specifically to capacity-building and included three specific targets on action to combat climate change and its impact. As a result, any debate on the long-term positioning of the United Nations development system and the need for it to be fit for purpose should address the Organization's efforts to build capacity, and any evaluation of its impact would need to pass the test of capacities actually built.

29. Through the process of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations operational activities for development, the General Assembly had requested the United Nations development system to build national capacities for development planning, data collection and analysis, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Those capacities formed the basis of the abilities of a country to lead its own development process. They were also at the core of the data revolution, which was an enabler of sustainable development. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review had also found that more national public and private systems should be part of the development system, to allow countries to rely on their own institutions for development support.

30. Capacity-building was clearly essential and the Organization had the system-wide tools needed to implement it. However, surveys commissioned by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had revealed that the inadequate use of national institutions could not be ascribed simply to a lack of willingness. In reality, it was symptomatic of the multitude of challenges faced by programme countries, Governments and the United Nations development system. On the one hand, the development system criticized the limited capacities of national institutions, weak transparency and accountability, high turnover of staff within government bodies and stringent donor requirements. On the other hand, programme countries criticized the United Nations for being risk averse, especially at a time when they were relying more on non-core resources, and for having procedures that were too complex to allow for the use of national systems. In

addition, insufficient resources were allocated to supporting national capacity development in results-based management, monitoring and evaluation. There were therefore obstacles on both sides and joint action by both parties was needed to improve the use of national systems and institutions.

31. United Nations system entities were making ongoing efforts to improve the measurement of agency-specific performance in supporting national capacity development. However, as part of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, a series of recommendations had been made to strengthen the contribution of the system to national capacity development and the use of national institutions. They included the need for the development system to critically review its internal capacities to support countries in delivering on the post-2015 development agenda. A system-wide approach to support functional capacities development must be combined with customized approaches to support technical and sectoral capacities. Coordinated responses to capacity development needs should extend beyond common concepts, policies and approaches to address the operational aspects of delivery, which included business models, rules and mechanisms that ensured the ability of the system to deliver joint responses.

32. Different funding modalities had different economic and political implications for capacity-building. It was important to assess the extent to which current funding modalities provided coherent but differentiated support tailored to different country needs, and the findings should be communicated to Member States in order to identify solutions that encouraged capacity-building. All those recommendations required action by all partners, including the United Nations development system, programme countries and donors.

33. **Mr. Javan** (Director, United Nations System Staff College), panellist, said that as the United Nations Staff System College was not field-based or involved in providing direct support for national capacity-building, caution should be exercised in qualifying the capacity development support that it provided. Nevertheless, the College did organize training activities for United Nations country teams and senior leadership as part of its inter-agency mandate. Efforts to improve United Nations support for national capacity development should focus on the four key components of development effectiveness: national ownership; partnership; comparative advantage; and maximum effectiveness and accountability. The overall goal of United Nations country teams was to support national counterparts in developing their capacities to lead, manage, achieve and account for their national development priorities. To do that, country teams needed to be equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and tools.

34. Effective national ownership required the involvement of a broad range of national actors who had both the commitment and incentives to pursue capacity development and reform. Ongoing analysis of priorities, positioning, power and incentives was necessary and measures were needed to improve the use of comprehensive diagnostic tools in collaborative projects. National ownership must be a priority in efforts to support transformational change for sustainable development.

35. The introduction of standard operating procedures for countries adopting the "Delivering as one" approach was an encouraging step forward, but even more substantive guidance would still be required, in particular in light of the new post-2015 development agenda. Despite the great leaps forward, too many programmes continued to focus on low-level operational issues rather than capacity issues, and too often development focused on technical assistance alone rather than on creating an enabling environment in a country or sector. The United Nations played a key role in building institutional capacities in Member States, which were critical to creating an enabling environment. To respond to that need, the Staff System College offered an electronic diagnostic programming tool and a system-wide course on political economy analysis in a post-2015 world for United Nations country teams.

36. In order to build national capacities, it was essential to leverage opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation, strengthen operational partnerships with multilateral organizations and regional entities, and support enabling environments and coalitions at country level for cooperation between all development actors. Joint efforts involving the public and private sectors and civil society were also of the essence. There was a lack of understanding of partnership development within the United Nations development system, and United Nations leaders at country level were insufficiently trained to be brokers of multi-stakeholder partnerships for national development or to play a catalytic role in transferring such capacities

to national counterparts. The confusion between partnership-building and resource mobilization was hindering the implementation of the truly transformative changes required under the new development agenda.

37. Many of the United Nations programming tools continued to be based on a deficiency-oriented programming approach focusing on the identification of all development challenges faced by a country. However, that approach did not allow for proper analysis. The tools should be more balanced and the system should invest in more catalytic programming tools in order to identify the key elements of transformative change. The post-2015 development agenda would create opportunities for change and enhancement, and the United Nations should strengthen its knowledge management and learning capabilities in order to support national counterparts in developing their capacity to lead and manage the implementation of that agenda. To that end, the Staff System College would significantly increase its learning and training activities relating to the sustainable development goals in order to support the policy and operational work of the United Nations. The learning tools and platforms for interaction would be tailored to increase the capacity of the United Nations to implement the post-2015 development agenda.

38. Unfortunately, while significant progress had been made, the capacity needs of the United Nations itself still needed to be enhanced so that the country teams were able to perform their capacity-building roles. Development challenges had become even more horizontal and multidisciplinary and the Organization needed to adapt continuously if it was to make a difference and drive change. The Staff System College would increase its focus on organizational reform, transformation and adaptation in order to contribute to the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the Organization in a post-2015 world.

39. Strengthening leadership capacity across the United Nations system was a principal mission of the College, since vision and courage in senior leadership were imperative to drive the change that the Organization urgently needed and ensure effective management of obstacles. To successfully deliver as one, senior leadership must be inspired by a sense of belonging to something that was greater than their own entity and must be equipped to create an environment in which staff felt empowered to take reasonable risks to promote United Nations values and principles.

40. Transformation was necessary to ensure that the United Nations would be fit for purpose to respond to the challenges of the new sustainable development agenda. The Organization also needed a humanitarian response system that was better able to fulfil growing needs. In order to be ready to help in the development of national capacities in programme countries, United Nations staff members needed should be equipped with adequate knowledge, tools and innovative capacity to enable the Organization to make a real difference and maintain its comparative advantage. Success would be determined not just by the steps taken relating to policies and programmes, but by the ability and willingness of the Organization to become a leader in the commitment to life-long learning and a genuine learning organization.

41. **Ms. Fladby** (Observer for Norway) wished to know why the sustainability of United Nations capacity-building efforts appeared to be weak and what could be done to enhance those efforts.

42. **Mr. Chanthabuly** (Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that greater coordination was needed within the United Nations development system and that all stakeholders should work together when assessing the needs of programme countries. It was also important to move from supply-driven to demand-driven decision-making for programme management. In addition, measures should be taken to encourage the participation of local volunteers and professionals in the United Nations development system.

43. **Mr. Choesni** (Director for International Development Cooperation, State Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas, Indonesia) said that, in order to be sustainable, the United Nations development system should take local needs into account and work with national partners in assessing country needs. Partnerships between national stakeholders and the United Nations should be strengthened, given that national and local stakeholders might have a better understanding of local needs than the United Nations. The comparative advantages of the United Nations, including its global knowledge, combined with local and national knowledge, would make project activities more sustainable.

44. **Mr. Gass** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that instead of

measuring the success of its capacity-building efforts based purely on whether a policy existed, the United Nations should ensure that projects included indicators that took into account the national institutions and processes actually established, rather than just output. In terms of funding modalities, core funding was crucial as it enabled the United Nations to respond to and negotiate with Governments and allowed Governments to exert influence over the United Nations system.

45. **Mr. Javan** (United Nations System Staff College) said that in order for the capacity-building efforts of the United Nations to be sustainable at country level, the United Nations must first ensure that its own entities had the capacity to deliver what was expected of them. It must then support and help develop the capacity of national institutions responsible for the education and training of citizens in such areas as public administration and management, thereby fostering national ownership.

46. *Mr. Sajdik took the Chair.*

General debate

47. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that mustering the political will and executive capacity to articulate and propose alternatives to the governance mechanisms of operational activities for development would be a significant challenge. It would be critical to determine how to implement the commitments made under the new development agenda. The principles and goals articulated following the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review must also serve as the basis for the activities of the United Nations development system. Moreover, agencies, funds and programmes must carry out their work in implementing the post-2015 development agenda in full conformity with the national priorities of developing countries.

48. The United Nations should reaffirm its role as the primary forum for development cooperation, which should not be conditioned by standards and concepts that did not enjoy a broad consensus among global stakeholders. The debate on cooperation for development should not be limited to aid effectiveness and should incorporate the perspective of South-South cooperation. The continued relevance of the United Nations operational activities for development would depend on the capacity of the agencies, funds and programmes to provide assistance where it was needed, to adapt to specific conditions and to be accountable to Member States.

49. It was time to reinvigorate the formal governance structures of the United Nations development system, especially the executive boards of the funds and programmes, to include an expanded voice and representation for developing countries. The Council's structured dialogues with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination had not fulfilled their promise. The efforts by the United Nations Development Programme to achieve greater transparency should serve as an example for the Board, the United Nations Development Group and other United Nations entities. Moreover, entities must be guaranteed predictable funding in order to achieve a healthier balance between core and non-core resources and to be better equipped to perform their roles. To that end, Member States had the collective responsibility to ensure that their contributions allowed for greater flexibility, predictability and alignment with national development priorities.

50. Arrangements for financial assistance from the private sector or through South-South cooperation should not lead to the reduction of the prior commitments of developed countries. New sources of development finance must be recognized as a complement to and not a substitute for traditional sources, which should retain their prominence in the global development cooperation landscape. Given that the resources obtained through official development assistance to date had not sufficed to meet sustainable development needs, it was imperative for traditional donors to honour and enhance their official development assistance commitments. Access to technology — both a means and a driver of sustainable development — on a favourable and affordable basis would be another essential contribution of North-South cooperation to development in the post-2015 period. Moreover, existing cooperation on technology within the United Nations system should be identified and scaled up in a more user-friendly manner for Member States.

51. Over the previous decade, Brazil had allocated more financial and other resources to South-South and triangular cooperation, particularly for sustainable programmes, food security and poverty eradication. The success of its policies in those areas had led the country to be recognized by the Food and Agricultural Organization as one where the target of reducing poverty by half had already been met or was expected

to be met in 2015, as reflected on the organization's Hunger Map 2014.

52. His Government was convinced that the role of South-South cooperation in implementing the post-2015 development agenda would be invaluable and markedly different from that of traditional forms of cooperation, with an emphasis on ownership, non-conditionality and demand-driven assistance. For its part, the United Nations should continue to establish norms and guidelines that would allow multilateral agencies to provide support to developing countries to help them intensify South-South cooperation. In that regard, he welcomed the establishment by the United Nations Development Group of an interagency task force to support the system-wide dissemination of South-South cooperation. Lastly, he called for broader engagement with and support for South-South cooperation and an adequate monitoring, transparency and accountability framework to mediate possible conflicts of interest in partnerships with non-governmental actors.

53. **Ms. Perceval** (Argentina) said that the international community was in agreement that it had a duty to promote economic, social and environmental development in order to help eradicate poverty and achieve greater equity. The concept of equity went beyond mere equality of opportunities to include equality of conditions and treatment, which Governments had a responsibility to promote in the interest of building a more just world. The attainment of that goal — upon which the legitimacy of Governments and the United Nations hinged — would require a coherent agenda with a concrete and comprehensive action plan.

54. Over the previous decade, many delegations had expressed concern about the stagnation of funding for the essential functions of the United Nations system from core resources, as compared to the exponential growth of non-core funding. The fact that funding of development activities from non-core resources had increased from 50 per cent in 1998 to 69 per cent in 2013 presented the system with a major challenge. Given the restricted and unpredictable nature of non-core funding, there were clear advantages to funding United Nations activities through the core budget, including the possibility of aligning the system with the priorities of Member States and with the principles of national ownership and neutrality. On several occasions, her Government had called for the imbalance between core and non-core funding to be redressed, to no avail.

55. If the United Nations was to play a decisive role in poverty eradication through 2030, business as usual, which was characterized by rigidity, lack of transparency and failure to adjust to international standards, was not an option; it would only be detrimental to the United Nations system and, most importantly, to rights bearers. Argentina valued efforts to increase harmonization, coordination and cooperation among funds and programmes, eliminate duplication and reduce transaction costs as part of the "Delivering as one" initiative. The need for institutional transformation through coherent and cohesive action was underscored by the extreme wealth inequality, conflicts and human rights abuses besetting the modern world. In that regard, the Organization must continue to take into account and respect the views of Member States in its development activities. Moreover, making international financial institutions more democratic, given the significant impact of their actions on country development, constituted a priority. The recent global economic and financial crisis had highlighted the need for financial institutions to align their goals with the objectives of a sustainable economy.

56. With regard to monitoring the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, her Government endorsed a system of voluntary, periodic national follow-up through reports, similar to the framework adopted for the Millennium Development Goals. Global sustainable development could only be achieved through a cooperative approach that respected diversity and the alternative development paths chosen by each society. Moreover, emphasis on results and accountability, while important, must not lead donor countries to make their financing decisions based on political visibility and short-term results.

57. South-South cooperation must be regarded as a complement to North-South cooperation, rather than as a substitute. In that connection, she welcomed the efforts of the United Nations system to support South-South cooperation with the establishment of a working group on the subject. The overall aim should be to leverage the operational capacities of the United Nations system in order to attend to the needs of developing countries, including middle-income countries. Ultimately, the challenge for the international community would be to strive for decency and integrity above mere ingenuity, to refrain from

exploiting poverty and from pitting humanitarian assistance needs against development needs. Instead, the international community should build bridges between the two, with a view to promoting the development and dignity of all societies and, through it, of all humankind.

58. **Mr. Krapp** (Germany) said that in order for the United Nations system to improve its capacity for coordination and collaboration with other stakeholders to meet the demands of the post-2015 development agenda, the full implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review recommendations must be given priority. In light of the distressing surge in humanitarian crises, the United Nations development system would need to find new ways to transition from humanitarian relief to development and to support recovery processes. Strong partnership was needed between humanitarian and development actors to improve coordination, consistency and alignment. In that connection, his delegation welcomed such new approaches as that exemplified by the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan. It commended the United Nations development system on the progress achieved with regard to the resident coordinator system and urged all entities of the United Nations Development Group that were expected to contribute to the cost-sharing agreement to fully implement and monitor the centralized funding modality. The selection of a resident coordinator must be merit-based, and increased diversity in the process was welcome.

59. The positive reception of the "Delivering as one" approach by some programme countries and the release of standard operating procedures for those countries in August 2014 had been a major positive development. Moving forward, it would be essential for the standard operating procedures to be implemented at country level and for bottlenecks at the Headquarters level to be removed. While the harmonization of business practices was not an end in itself, integrated business solutions and common services in all areas of operation would be important tools for efficiency gains and savings at the country level. It was therefore distressing that progress on that front remained slow. Risk management practices, enterprise resource planning and common premises for United Nations country teams were important areas to consider with equal priority to that attached to procurement, human resources management and information and communications technology.

60. The widespread perception that the existence of different rules and regulations was the main factor preventing country teams from further harmonizing their business practices must be taken into account. Improving the capacity of the United Nations development system to collect and analyse data was key to the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda at all levels. The Millennium Development Goals monitoring process had led to an increase in statistical capacity and data availability, but more remained to be done. The post-2015 agenda included a better alignment of global monitoring exercises with national data availability. The high-level political forum on sustainable development would provide a platform to discuss the requirements for the establishment of an accountability framework.

61. His delegation welcomed measures taken by the United Nations development system to broaden the donor base but was concerned that a high proportion of funds continued to originate from a limited number of donor countries. It therefore encouraged institutions to further develop and enforce their resource mobilization strategies. In order to improve the funding base, Germany supported, inter alia, new approaches to streamline and simplify funding modalities. To that end, it recognized the importance of such funding instruments as the new "Delivering Results Together" Fund. Programme countries sought support from the United Nations in areas that required a coherent and efficient operational system, hence the need to further promote the concept of delivering as one and the harmonization of business practices. Doing so would ensure the continued relevance of the United Nations system based on its ability to provide coherent and integrated support to those countries.

62. Lastly, South-South cooperation, an important complement to North-South cooperation, had considerable potential to contribute to the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Germany actively promoted triangular cooperation, a useful link between North-South and South-South cooperation and an important component of the future international development architecture. It would be necessary to further strengthen systematic data collection and analysis of South-South and triangular cooperation in order to determine the forms of and conditions for cooperation most conducive to success. The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation could play an important role in that regard.

63. **Ms. Nguyen** Phuong Nga (Observer for Viet Nam) said that United Nations funds and programmes should align their strategic plans with the priorities of the new development agenda and support programme countries in integrating the sustainable development goals into their development strategies. The United Nations development system should also continue to provide capacity-building assistance to developing countries to enable them to address the various development challenges they faced. In order to coordinate those efforts, the system must become more efficient, effective, coherent and responsive at all levels.

64. Her delegation called for the application of the standard operating procedures across agencies. It welcomed the increase in the number of programme countries implementing the "Delivering as one" approach, which had enhanced the Organization's capacity to provide those countries with coherent strategic and policy advice and technical assistance. For its part, Viet Nam continued to implement all components of the "Delivering as one" initiative and would soon be inaugurating a complex called Green One UN House, which would house all United Nations organizations in Viet Nam. That measure was expected to improve programme coordination of the United Nations country team, facilitate the use of common services and significantly reduce operating costs. In closing, her Government called on United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to take bolder steps at Headquarters level to support country-level progress, and urged donor countries to provide increased, predictable, non-earmarked funding to support the implementation of the "Delivering as one" initiative and United Nations operational activities in general.

65. **Mr. Beviglia Zampetti** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union welcomed the release of the standard operating procedures and reiterated the importance it attached to their prompt implementation by the entire United Nations development system. More needed to be done to ensure that all the pillars of the "Delivering as one" initiative were implemented equally, and to improve coordination between United Nations agencies and other partners. Given the success of the initiative, it should be scaled up going forward.

66. The European Union urged all funds, programmes and specialized agencies to implement and monitor the cost-sharing arrangement in support of the resident coordinator system, to ensure that the necessary resources were made available, and to create a greater impact at country level. Furthermore, the authority and legitimacy of resident coordinators should be strengthened in accordance with their mandates. The structured dialogues organized by the governing bodies of the United Nations development system on the financing of the development results set out in the entities' strategic plans were a welcome development and should be held on an annual basis. Efforts should also be made to broaden the funding base of operational activities for development.

67. The European Union welcomed the progress made towards implementing the recommendations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In that connection, it called for the United Nations system to implement and report on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Given that the post-2015 agenda would intensify the need for the United Nations system to be more coherent, efficient and effective, it was crucial to build on the progress achieved to date towards implementing the recommendations of the policy review. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the Council's ongoing dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. It looked forward to contributing actively to discussions on how to ensure that the United Nations development system was fit for purpose to support the implementation of the post-2015 agenda.

Closing statement by the President

68. **The President** said that the Council's dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system provided Member States with a tool to renew the Organization's capacity to serve the countries that needed its support the most. With the United Nations development system at a crossroads, a transformative sustainable development agenda would entail a truly system-wide approach. The Organization would have to develop the capacity to shift seamlessly between specialization and integration in delivering its operational activities. Its field presence would also need to be tailored to the level of operational activities in programme countries. Moreover, the system would have to more effectively communicate the anticipated transformative impact of the new development agenda.

69. For the United Nations development system to be fit for purpose at country level, it would need greater flexibility and agility to respond to the changing development context. To that end, the system's capacity for coordination at the inter-agency and intergovernmental levels would need to be strengthened. The experience with the "Delivering as one" initiative showed that Governments in programme countries associated improved coordination with enhanced development effectiveness and greater national ownership of operational activities in the United Nations system. It was essential to ensure that the funding architecture of the operational activities of the United Nations system was effectively aligned with the post-2015 development agenda. The current fragmented architecture was not suitable for cooperation among the various entities in implementing the new agenda.

70. While the United Nations development system had made significant progress towards implementing the mandates established by General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the system's operational activities, certain gaps remained. Reforms at Headquarters level were of particular importance, as was continued strengthening of the resident coordinator system in the remaining two years of the current policy review cycle. Gaining a deeper understanding of the expectations of Member States as to the system's role in advancing South-South cooperation would also be crucial. Lastly, as the demand for a policy advisory role for the United Nations development system was increasing in the post-2015 era, it would be necessary to strengthen the use of national capacities and systems in the delivery of operational activities. He concluded by thanking all the panellists, representatives of Member States and United Nations entities for their constructive engagement in the segment.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.